

What is claimed is:

1. In a system for monitoring gas concentrations in flue gas generated by a combustor, a gas sensor comprising:

an outer shell disposed in a stream of flue gas in a post-flame zone of the combustor and having at least one opening in fluid communication with the flue gas;

a solid electrolyte cell disposed within the outer shell;

at least one seal cooperating with the electrolyte cell to form a sensing chamber isolated from the flue gas;

a first electrode disposed within the sensing chamber and being isolated from the flue gas so as not to be in direct fluid contact with the flue gas; and

a second electrode disposed in the outer shell and positioned in close proximity to the at least one opening so as to be in fluid contact with the flue gas, a voltage being generated across the first and second electrodes representing at least two conditions.

2. The gas sensor of claim 1 further comprising a reference gas conduit disposed in the sensing chamber and adapted to supply a reference gas to the chamber.

3. The gas sensor of claim 1 further comprising a conduit disposed within the outer shell and adjacent the electrolyte cell and second electrode, the conduit being in fluid communication with the flue gas.

4. The gas sensor of claim 3, wherein the conduit delivers a calibration gas in close proximity to the second electrode, the second electrode being effectively calibrated based at least in part on the effect of the calibration gas on the condition sensed by the second electrode.

5. The gas sensor of claim 4, wherein the calibration gas comprises an essentially fixed concentration of O₂.

6. The gas sensor of claim 3, wherein sample flue gas is extracted from the sensor through the conduit for delivery to a reference gas analyzer.

7. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the solid electrolyte cell is tubular in shape, the sensor comprising two seals disposed substantially at respective ends of the electrolyte cell to cooperate to form the sensing chamber.

8. The gas sensor of claim 1 further comprising a thermocouple located in close proximity to the electrolyte cell and being adapted to monitor temperature and provide a reference to adjust for varying temperature conditions in the outer shell.

9. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the first electrode is in fluid contact with a reference gas and a voltage signal generated across the first and second electrodes is analyzed to monitor the concentration of gases in the flue gas.

10. The gas sensor of claim 9, wherein the voltage signal represents the concentration of one or more of the group consisting of oxygen, carbon monoxide, and nitric oxide.

11. The gas sensor of claim 1 further comprising a third electrode disposed within the outer shell and being in fluid communication with the flue gas, the third electrode cooperating with one of the first and second electrodes to sense the concentration of an intended gas in the flue gas, the intended gas being one of a group consisting of oxygen, carbon monoxide, and nitric oxides.

12. The gas sensor of claim 11, wherein the third electrode is at least in part covered by a filter to react with a second gas in the flue gas to eliminate the effect of the second gas so as to enhance the accuracy of the concentration measured of the intended gas.

13. The gas sensor of claim 11, wherein the first and second electrodes cooperate to generate a first signal representing the concentration of a first intended gas and the second and third electrodes cooperate to generate a second signal representing the concentration of a second intended gas, the first and second intended

gases each being one of a group consisting of oxygen, carbon monoxide, and nitric oxides.

14. The gas sensor of claim 13, wherein one the first and second signals may be further analyzed to determine the concentration of a third intended gas.

15. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein electrical signals representing the gas concentrations respectively sensed by the first and second electrodes are generated, the signals being processed by the system in one or more of a time or frequency domain to yield combustion parameters.

16. The gas sensor of claim 15, wherein the electrical signals are one or more of a fluctuational AC component and a DC component.

17. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the combustor is one of the group consisting of a boiler, a furnace, and a gas turbine.

18. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the combustor includes a burner that generates flue gases, the burner being one of the group consisting of a gas-fired burner, a coal-fired burner, an oil-fired burner, and a fossil fuel-fired burner.

19. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the first and second electrodes are made from a material that is porous and catalytic.

20. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the electrolyte cell has one closed end.

21. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the first electrode and the second electrode generate a signal comprised of a DC component and a fluctuating AC component.

22. The gas sensor of claim 21, wherein the DC component is processed in accordance with the Nernst equation and is used to determine the O₂ concentration.

23. The gas sensor of claim 21, wherein the AC component is processed to determine the concentration of at least one of the group consisting of carbon monoxide, nitric oxides and gaseous combustibles.

24. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the two conditions is comprised of a DC component and a fluctuating AC component.

25. The gas sensor of claim 24, wherein the DC component is analyzed to determine an O₂ concentration in the flue gas.

26. The gas sensor of claim 24, wherein the fluctuating AC component is analyzed to determine a parameter representing the concentration of combustibles in the flue gas.

27. The gas sensor of claim 24, wherein the fluctuating AC component is analyzed to determine a concentration in the flue gas of at least one of the group consisting of carbon monoxide, and nitric oxides.

28. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein a support conduit is disposed in the post flame zone of the combustor and at one end is supported by and affixed to a wall of the combustor, the gas sensor being at one end attached to and supported by the support conduit, electrical leads being connected to the first and second electrodes and being disposed in the support conduit and exiting the post-flame zone and the support conduit at the one end of the support conduit.

29. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the electrolyte cell is comprised of zirconia.

30. The gas sensor of claim 1, wherein the electrolyte cell is comprised of yttria stabilized zirconia.

31. In an emissions monitoring system for monitoring constituent concentration of flue gas components in a combustor, the monitoring system comprising:

a first sampling probe comprising:

an outer shell disposed in a post-flame zone of the combustor and having at least one opening for receiving a flue gas;

a solid electrolyte cell disposed within the outer shell;

at least one seal cooperating with the electrolyte cell to form a sensing chamber isolated from the flue gas;

a first electrode disposed within the sensing chamber and being isolated from the flue gas so as not to be in direct fluid contact with the flue gas; and

a second electrode disposed in the outer shell and positioned in close proximity to the at least one opening so as to be in fluid contact with the flue gas, a voltage being generated across the first and second electrodes, the voltage representing the concentration of a first flue gas component;

a second sampling probe of the same type as the first sampling probe for monitoring the concentration of a second flue gas component; and

at least one analyzer having inputs for monitoring the receiving the voltages generated by the first and second sampling probes and having a processor for analyzing the voltage data to determine the concentrations of the first and second flue gas components.

32. In an emissions monitoring system used in a combustor operation, a method for monitoring the concentration of constituent gases in a flue gas generated by the combustor operation, the method comprising the steps of:

sampling the flue gas by a gas sensor disposed in a post-flame zone of a combustor;

placing a first porous electrode in a sensing chamber defined at least in part by a solid electrolyte cell and isolating the first electrode from the flue gas;

disposing a second porous electrode opposite the first electrode with a portion of the solid electrolyte cell disposed therebetween and placing the second electrode in fluid communication with the flue gas; and

analyzing a voltage generated across the first and second electrodes to determine concentrations of two constituent gases in the flue gas.

33. The method of claim 32 further comprising the step of providing a reference gas to the sensing chamber.

34. The method of claim 32 further comprising the step of providing a calibration gas to impinge upon the second electrode and analyzing the change in the voltage to adjust a parameter related to at least one constituent gas concentration.

35. The method of claim 32 further comprising the steps of:

placing a third porous electrode opposite the first electrode with a portion of the solid electrolyte disposed therebetween and placing the third electrode in fluid communication with the flue gas; and

analyzing a voltage generated across the first and third electrodes to determine the concentration of a constituent gas in the flue gas.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein the constituent gases are from the group consisting of: oxygen; carbon monoxide; and nitric oxides.

37. The method of claim 32, wherein the constituent gases are from the group consisting of: oxygen; carbon monoxide; and nitric oxides.